I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Owner/Installer Responsibility

Beautiful hardwood floors are a product of nature and therefore, not perfect. Our hardwood floors are manufactured in accordance with accepted industry standards, which permit grading deficiencies not to exceed 5%. These grading deficiencies may be of a manufacturing or natural type.

When flooring is ordered, 5% must be added to the actual square footage needed for cutting and grading allowance (10% for diagonal installations).

• The owner/installer assumes all responsibility for final inspection of product quality. Inspection of all flooring should be done prior to installation. Carefully examine flooring for color, finish and quality before installing it. If material is not acceptable, do not install it. Contact the seller immediately.

• Prior to installation of any hardwood flooring product, the owner/installer must determine that the job-site environment and the sub-surfaces involved meet or exceed all applicable standards. Recommendations of the construction and materials industries, as well as local codes, must be followed. These instructions recommend that the subfloor be clean, dry, stiff, flat. The installer is responsible for any job failure resulting from, or associated with, subfloor and substructures or job-site environmental deficiencies.

• Prior to installation, the owner/installer has final inspection responsibility as to grade, manufacture and factory finish. The installer must use reasonable selectivity and hold out for any variations or deficiencies, whatever the cause. Should an individual piece be doubtful as to grade, manufacture or factory finish, the installer should not use the piece.

• Use of stain, filler or grout stick for touch-up and appropriate products for correcting subfloor voids is accepted as part of normal installation procedure.

NOTE: When installing 3/4" Solid hardwood flooring wider than 4" a serpentine bead of Premium urethane Construction adhesive should be applied to the back of each board. Apply 1/4" bead then follow the correct fastening pattern with an appropriate blind fastening machine.

ATTENTION INSTALLERS

CAUTION: WOOD DUST

Sawing, sanding and machining wood products can produce wood dust. Airborne wood dust can cause respiratory, eye and skin irritation. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has classified wood dust as a nasal carcinogen in humans.

Precautionary Measures: If power tools are used, they should be equipped with a dust collector. If dust levels are encountered, use an appropriate NIOSH-designated dust mask. Avoid dust contact with eye and skin.

First Aid Measures in Case of Ingestion: in case of ingestion, flush eyes or skin with water for at least 15 minutes.

If you have any technical or installation questions, or to request a Material Safety Data Sheet, please call 1 866 243 2726 or visit www.floorexpert.com, our technical website.

IMPORTANT HEALTH NOTICE FOR MINNESOTA RESIDENTS ONLY: FELT, ASPHALTIC "CUTBACK" ADHESIVE, OR OTHER ADHESIVE.

THESE BUILDING MATERIALS EMIT FORMALDEHYDE, EYE, NOSE, AND THROAT IRRITATION, HEADACHE, NAUSEA AND A VARIETY OF ASTHMATIC-LIKE SYMPTOMS, INCLUDING SHORTESTY OF BREATH, HAVE BEEN REPORTED AS A RESULT OF FORMALDEHYDE EXPOSURE. ELDERLY PERSONS AND YOUNG CHILDREN, AS WELL AS ANYONE WITH A HISTORY OF ASTHMATIC, ALLERGIC OR LUNG PROBLEMS, MAY BE AT GREATER RISK. RESEARCH IS CONTINUING ON THE POSSIBLE Long-TERM EFFECTS OF EXPOSURE TO FORMALDEHYDE.

REDUCED VENTILATION MAY ALLOW FORMALDEHYDE AND OTHER CONTAMINANTS TO ACCUMULATE IN THE INDOOR AIR. HIGH INDOOR TEMPERATURES AND HUMIDITY RAISE FORMALDEHYDE LEVELS. WHEN A HOME IS LOCATED IN AREAS SUBJECT TO EXTREME SUMMER TEMPERATURES, AN AIR-CONDITIONING SYSTEM CAN BE USED TO CONTROL INDOOR TEMPERATURE LEVELS. OTHER MEANS OF CONTROLLED MECHANICAL VENTILATION CAN BE USED TO REDUCE LEVELS OF FORMALDEHYDE AND OTHER INDOOR AIR CONTAMINANTS.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF FORMALDEHYDE, CONSULT YOUR DOCTOR OR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

II. PREPARATION

Storage and Handling

Solid hardwood flooring should be stored in the environment in which it is expected to perform. Deliver the materials to an environmentally controlled site. The wood subflooring materials must not exceed 12% moisture content. Using a reliable wood moisture meter, measure and document the moisture content of both the subfloor and the hardwood flooring, to determine proper moisture content. The difference between the moisture content of the wood subfloor and the wood flooring must not exceed 3% (2% for plank). Take MC readings on a minimum of 40 boards per 1,000 sf, and an additional 4 readings per 100 square feet thereafter, and average the results. With плит-type moisture meters, tests should be taken on the back of the boards to avoid damage to the face of the flooring. Acclimate the hardwood flooring on or off the job, as necessary, to meet these requirements. Store in a dry place, being sure to provide at least a four-inch air space under cartons, which are stored upon "on-grade" concrete floors. Flooring should not be delivered until the building has been enclosed, with windows and doors in place, and until cement work, plastering and all other "wet" work is completed and dry. Concrete should be at least 60 days old.

Job-Site Conditions

• The building should be enclosed with all outside doors and windows in place. All concrete, Masonry, framing members, drywall, paint and other “wet” work should be thoroughly dry. The wall coverings should be in place and the painting complete. The floor should be clean and dry. Any condition which requires delay or installation of base molding until flooring installation is complete. Basements and crawl spaces must be dry and well ventilated.

• Exterior grading should be complete with surface drainage, offering a minimum slope of 1/8" (1" in 24") of rise over a 1' run. Prior toberting, exterior grading must be completed.

• Crawl spaces must be a minimum of 18" (46 cm) from the ground to the underside of the joists. A ground cover of 6-8 mil black polyethylene film is essential as a vapor barrier with joints lapped 6" (15 cm) and sealed with moisture resistant tape. The crawl space should have perimeter venting equal to a minimum of 1.5% of the crawl space square footage. These vents should be properly located to foster cross ventilation (Figure 1). Where necessary, local regulations prevail.

• The installation site should have a constant room temperature of 60-80°F (16-27°C) and humidity of 30-50% for 14 days prior to and during installation and until occupied.

WARNING: EXISTING IN-PLACE RESILIENT FLOOR COVERING AND ASPHALTIC ADHESIVES, DO NOT SAND, DRY SWEEP, DRY SCRAPE, DRILL, SAW, BEADLAST, OR MECHANICALLY CHIP OR PULVERIZE EXISTING RESILIENT FLOORING, BACKING, LINOFL, ASPHALT, "CUTBACK" ADHESIVE, OR OTHER ADHESIVE.

These existing in-place products may contain asbestos fibers and/or crystalline silica.

Avoid creating dust. Inhalation of such dust is a cancer and respiratory tract hazard.

Smoking by individuals exposed to asbestos fibers greatly increases the risk of serious bodily harm.

Unless positively certain that the existing in-place product is a non-asbestos-containing material, you must presume it contains asbestos. Regulations may require that the material be tested to determine asbestos content and may govern removal and disposal of the material.

See current edition of the Resilient Floor Covering Institute (RFCI) publication Recommended Work Practices for Removal of Resilient Floor Covering for instructions on removing all resilient floor covering structures or contact your model or Ahf Products 1 866 243 2726.

The floor covering or adhesive in this package does not contain asbestos.

Subfloor Conditions

• CLEAN – Subfloor must be free of wax, paint, oil, sealers, adhesives and other debris.

• LEVEL/FLAT – Within 3/16" in 10’ (5.0 mm in 3 m) and/or 1/8” in 6’ (3 mm in 2 m). Sand high areas or joints. Flatten low spots with a maximum 6 layers of 15# builders felt, plywood or shims (not leveling compounds).

• DRY – Check and document moisture content of the subfloor with the appropriate moisture test. Install moisture retardant materials if needed or desired. (See plank installation note.) Moisture retardant materials must meet minimum perm standards of 3.0 ASTM C488-96, Type I or F.S. U-6-7694, Type I, Grade O, Style 1a. Most asphalt saturated papers, #15 felt or Grade D Kraft paper meet this perm rating. Common brown Kraft builders paper and red resin generally do not qualify as vapor retarders. Concrete subfloors must be a minimum of 30 days old before testing begins.

• STRUCTURALLY STRONG – Nail or screw any areas that are loose or squeak. Wood panels should exhibit an adequate fastening pattern, glued screwed or nailed as system requires, using an acceptable nailing pattern. Typical 8” (20 cm) along bearing edges and 12” (31 cm) at intermediate supports. Flatten any swollen edges as necessary. Replace any water-damaged, swollen or delaminated subflooring or underlayment.

NOTE: Avoid subfloors with excessive vertical movement. Optimum performance of hardwood flooring covers occurs when there is little horizontal or vertical movement of the subfloor. If the subfloor has excessive vertical movement (deflection) before installation of the flooring, it is likely it will do so after installation of the flooring is complete.

Subfloors with Radiant Heat

NOTE: Do not install this product over Subfloors with Radiant Heat.

Tools & Accessories Needed

NOTE: IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO USE THE PROPER ADAPTERS, FACE PLATES, AS WELL AS STAPLES OR CLIPS, IMPROPER FASTENERS, MACHINES AND AIR PRESSURE CAN CAUSE SEVERE DAMAGE. THE MANUFACTURER OF THIS FLOOR PRODUCT IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR DAMAGE CAUSED BY USE OF IMPROPER TOOLS OR MISUSE.

(All Installation Methods)

• Chalk line & chalk • Recommended hardwood flooring cleaner • Nail set • Tape measure • Hammer • Electric power saw • NISH-designated dust mask • Electric drill and bits • Compressor and hose w/in-line regulator for pneumatic tools • Blind "fastening machine for 3/4" (19 mm) flooring (see note below) • 1/16”-1/2” or 2” (4-6 cm) fasteners • Pneumatic finish nailer with 1-1/2” or 2” (4-5 cm) nails • 8-8d finish nails • Moisture meter (wood, concrete or both) • Broom • Hand saw or jamb saw • Eye protection • Transition and wall mouldings • Urethane construction adhesive for Floors wider than 4” (10 cm)

For complete warranty information call 1 866 243 2726 or visit ahfproducts.com.
**III. SUBFLOOR/UNDERLAYMENT REQUIREMENTS**

**Wood Subfloors and Underlayment**

General: The wood subfloors must not exceed 13% moisture content. Use a reliable wood moisture meter, measure the moisture content of both the subfloor and the hardwood flooring to determine proper moisture content. The difference between these tests will be acceptable up to 4% for strip flooring. When installing flooring parallel to the joists it may be necessary to stiffen the subfloor system by installing tongue and groove panels maximum of 3/8” (9.5 mm) approved wood underlayment. Applicable standards and recommendations of the construction and materials industries must be met or exceeded.

**Wood Structural Panel Subfloors and Underlayment (Non-engineered)**

Structural panels are required to be installed sealed side down. When used as a subfloor allow 1/8” (3 mm) expansion space between each panel. When spacing is inadequate, cut in a circular saw. Do not cut in expansion space on tongue and groove panels.

**Plywood:**
- Must be minimum CDX grade (exposure 1) and meet US-Canadian Structural Panel Standard PS2-95 performance standard or Canadian performance standard CAN/CSA 0325-93.
- The thickness should be 3/4” (19 mm) as a subfloor or minimum 5/8” (16 mm) when used as a panel top. A minimum 5/8” (16 mm) thickness is recommended.
- Oriented Strand Board (OSB): Conforming to US-Canadian Structural Panel Standard PS2-92 or Canadian performance standard CAN/CSA 0325-92 construction sheathing. Check the underside of the panel for codes. When used as a subfloor, the panels must be maximum 9” wide and minimum 23/32” (18 mm) thick when used as a subfloor or 3/8” (8.5 mm) as an underlayment. Some board manufacturers’ recommendations vary.

**Solid Wood Subfloors**

- Minimum 3/4” (19 mm) thick with a maximum width of 6” (15 cm) installed at a 45° angle to the floor joists.
- Group 1 dense softwood (Pine, Larch, Douglas Fir, etc.) No. 2 common, kiln dried with all board ends bearing on joists.

**Concrete (Requires Additional Subfloor)**

We encourage the use of a plywood subfloor when installing solid hardwood flooring over a concrete slab. Some adhesive manufacturers have had substantial success with direct glue applications (no plywood subfloor) using a variety of different adhesives and moisture resistant systems. Follow the adhesive manufacturer’s recommendations and check their warranty coverage. In some cases you will need to first adhere plywood to concrete please review the adhesive manufacturer’s recommendation for proper application, proper adhesive and correct travel notch and spread rate. Solid hardwood flooring makes it impossible to always guarantee perfectly straight lines as these characteristics are inherent to the product. This type of characteristic is not considered a defect therefore when installing using the glue down installation system this will require a higher safety factor (10-15%).

**Concrete Moisture Tests**

All concrete subfloors should be tested, and results documented, for moisture content. Visual checks may not be reliable. Test several areas, especially near exterior walls and areas with plumbing containing. Acceptable test methods for subfloor moisture content include:

- Tramex Concrete Moisture Encounter Meter (Figure 3): Moisture readings should not exceed 4.5 on the upper scale. (Figure 3 shows an unacceptable reading of over 4.5). Consecutively Tramex Meters give qualitatively similar results—qualitative analysis, not quantitative ones. A quick way to determine if more testing is required.

**NOTE:** The following tests are required in commercial applications. Either or both tests are acceptable:

- **Calcium Chloride Test (ASTM F 1669):** The maximum moisture transfer must not exceed 6% moisture to 24 hrs.
- **RH Levels in Concrete Using In-situ Probes (ASTM F 2170-02) should not exceed 75%**

**Dry/core, AS F 2170-02 states: These tests can be used at other times of the year. These tests do not guarantee a dry core. All new construction concrete slabs should have a minimum of 10 MIL POLY FILM MOISTURE BARRIER BETWEEN THE GROUND AND THE CONCRETE.**

**Wood/Concrete Subfloor Systems**

**Fastened to concrete**

Concrete must be of high compressive strength, 3000 PSI or better. Install a suitable moisture retarder followed by a plywood subfloor with a minimum thickness of 3/4” (19 mm). Allow 1/2” (13 mm) expansion space around all vertical objects, 1 1/2” (38 mm) between all floor panels. Install a second layer of plywood over the first layer, preferably less than 4’ x 8’ (1.2 x 2.4 m) oriented at 45 degrees (preferred) offer better results. The panel must be properly attached to the subfloor using a minimum of 8 gage x 1-1/2” (38 mm) diameter nails or screws. Use plywood or concrete fasteners. Do not use header nail the subfloor with concrete nails. Install a moisture retarder barrier with joints taped 6” (15 cm) and begin installation of flooring using 1-1/4” (32 mm) fasteners.

**Floating**

Install a suitable moisture retarder followed by a plywood subfloor with a minimum thickness of 3/8” (8.5mm) 1/2” (13 mm) preferred. Allow 1/2” (13 mm) expansion space around all vertical objects and 1 1/2” (38 mm) between all floor panels. Install a second layer of plywood over the first layer, preferably less than 4’ x 8’ (1.2 x 2.4 m) oriented at 45 degrees (preferred) offer better results. The panel must be properly attached to the subfloor using a minimum of 8 gage x 1-1/2” (38 mm) diameter nails or screws. Use plywood or concrete fasteners. Do not use header nail the subfloor with concrete nails. Install a moisture retarder barrier with joints taped 6” (15 cm) and begin installation of flooring using 1-1/4” (32 mm) fasteners.

**Screeds/sleepers**

Solid hardwood flooring 4” (10 cm) and above in width cannot be installed directly to screeds. Screeds should be installed 8” (20 cm) apart. In rivers of adhesives, at right angles to the flooring to be installed. Do not begin installation until all adhesives are properly cured. Install a moisture retardant over the screeds prior to installation of the flooring.

**IV. INSTALLING THE FLOOR**

**General Installation Tips**

- Floors should be installed from several cartons at the same time to ensure good color and shade mixture.
- When possible, present and set aside boards that blend well with all floor mounted moldings used to ensure uniform appearance. Install these boards adjoining the moldings.
- Be attentive to the staggering of the ends of at least 4”-6” (10-15 cm), when possible, in adjacent rows (Figure 4). This will help ensure a more favorable overall appearance of the floor.
- Large spans exceeding 20” (5 m) in hardwood flooring width, in areas of high humidity, may require the addition of internal or exterior expansion. This can be accomplished by using spaced supports, such as small washers, every 10-20 rows inserted above the tongue. Remove the spacers after several adjoining rows have been fastened. Do not leave spacers in for more than three days.

**STEP 1: Doorway and Wall Preparation**

- Undercut door casings and jambs. Remove any existing base, shoe mold or doorway thresholds. These items can be replaced after installation. All door casings and jambs should be sanded to avoid difficult scribe cuts (Figure 5).
- Install the moisture retarder (if used) parallel to the flooring. Overlay the tops of doors and windows without direct contact with the flooring. The glue should be seen as a premium grade urethane construction adhesive applied in a serpentined pattern to the back of the hardwood as noted in Figure 6.

**STEP 2: Establish a Starting Point**

- Installation parallel to the longest wall is recommended for best visual effects; however, the floor should be installed perpendicular to the flooring joists unless subfloor has been reinforced to reduce subfloor sagging.
- When possible, always begin layout or installation from the straightest wall, generally an outside wall.
- Use a laser level to determine floor level. This will help ensure the floor is even and level. Level the floor using a laser level and begin installation from the longest straightest wall. Align tongue of first row on chalk line. The groove should be facing the starting wall.
- Use a pneumatic finish nailer to face-nail the groove side 1/2” (13 mm) from the edge at 6” (15 cm) intervals and 1”-3” (2.5-7.6 cm) from each end. Then, blind nail using a finishing gun held at a 45 degree angle. Nail down through the nailing ‘pocket’ on top of the tongue every 6”-9” (15-23 cm) (Figure 6).
- If using finish nails, pre-drill the nail holes with a 1/2” (2 mm) bit approximately 1/2” (13 mm) from back (groove) edge. 1”-3” (2.5-7.6 cm) from each end, and at 6” (15 cm) intervals. Pre-drill at the same intervals at a 45 degree angle down through the nailing ‘pocket’ on top of the tongue (Figure 8). Face-nail the groove side with a finishing nail. When completing blind-nail at a 45° angle through the tongue of the first row. Fasten using 6 or 8d finish nails. Cornering nails to ensure flush engagement of the groove. Avoid nailing the hardwood by using a nail set to counter-sink the nails.
- Continue blind-nailing using this method with the following rows until blind nailer can be used.

**STEP 3: Installing First & Second Rows – Starting from Wall**

- Use the longest, straightest boards available for the first two rows. For random and alternate width products use the widest plank for the first row. Align tongue of first row on chalk line. The groove should be facing the starting wall.
- Use a pneumatic finish nailer to face-nail the groove side 1/2” (13 mm) from the edge at 6” (15 cm) intervals and 1”-3” (2.5-7.6 cm) from each end. Then, blind nail using a finishing gun held at a 45 degree angle. Nail down through the nailing ‘pocket’ on top of the tongue every 6”-9” (15-23 cm) (Figure 6).
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**STEP 3-2 Alternative: Installing First & Second Rows – Starting from Center of Subfloor**

- Snap a chalk line down the center of the room.
- Install a sacrificial row that extends the entire length of the room on the centerline.
- Install three rows of flooring.
- Remove the sacrificial row and insert wood glue in the groove followed by a slip tongue (plioli) in the exposed groove.
- Always glue and nail the slip tongue in place.
- Installation can now continue from the center in both directions.
STEP 4: Dry Lay (Racking) the Floor

- "Dry" lay (rack) materials to cover approximately two-thirds of the room. Begin dry laying (racking) approximate 6" (15 cm) from the edge of the previously installed rows. Avoid pulling boards too tightly together on the sides, as they must move freely when fastening begins.
- Do not cut final board until row has been installed. Cutting the board in advance may result in a board that is too short.
- Visually inspect flooring, setting aside boards that need to have natural character flaws cut out.
- Use these boards for the starting and finishing rows after objectionable characteristics have been removed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fastener Schedule</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Width of flooring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maximum spacing</td>
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<td>Preferred spacing</td>
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STEP 5: Installing the Floor

- Use the blind nailer to fasten a sacrificial board to the floor. Check for surface damage, air pressure setting, tongue damage, etc., before proceeding. Make all adjustments and corrections before installation begins. Once proper adjustments have been made, remove and destroy the board.
- Begin installation with several rows at a time. Use the fastener schedule (Figure 10) for proper spacing based on board width. Fasten each board with a minimum of two fasteners 1”–3” (2.5–7.6 cm) from the ends. To ensure a more favorable overall appearance end-joints of adjacent rows should be staggered a minimum of 4”–6” (10–15 cm) when possible.
- The last 1–2 rows will need to be face-nailed where clearance does not permit blind nailing with the stapler or brad nailer. Pre-drill and face-nail on the tongue side following the nailing pattern used for the first row.
- Rip final row to fit and face-nail. If the final row is less than 1” (2.5 cm) in width, it should first be glued to the previous UNINSTALLED row and the two joined units should be face-nailed as one.

STEP 6: Complete the Installation

- Remove all tape and clean the floor with the recommended hardwood flooring cleaner.
- Install or re-install any transition pieces, reducer strips, T-moldings, thresholds, bases and/quarter round moldings that may be needed. These products are available pre-finished to blend with your flooring (see below). Nail moldings into the wall, not the floor.
- Inspect the floor, filing all minor gaps with the appropriate blended filler.
- If the floor is to be covered, use a breathable material such as cardboard. Do not cover with plastic.
- Leave warranty and floor care information with the owner. Advise them of the product name and code number of the flooring they purchased.
- To prevent surface damage, avoid rolling heavy furniture and appliances on the floor. Use plywood, hardboard or appliance lifts if necessary. Use protective castors/caster cups or felt pads on the legs of furniture to prevent damage to the flooring.

V. TRANSITION AND WALL MOLDINGS

- **Reducer Strip**: A teardrop-shaped molding used around fireplaces, doorways, as a room divider, or as a transition between wood flooring and adjacent thinner floor coverings. Fasten down with adhesive, small nails or double-faced tape.
- **Threshold**: A molding used for use against sliding door tracks, fireplaces, carpet, ceramic tile, or existing thresholds to allow for expansion space and to provide a smooth transition in height difference. Fasten to subfloor with adhesive and nails/nails through the heel. Pre-drill nail holes to prevent splitting.
- **Stair Nose**: A molding used for use as stair landings trim, elevated floor perimeters, and stair steps. Fasten down firmly with adhesive and nails or screws. Pre-drill nail holes to prevent splitting.
- **Quarter Round**: A molding used to cover expansion space next to baseboards, case goods, and stair steps. Pre-drill and nail to the vertical surface, nail into the floor.
- **Combination Base and Shoe**: A molding used as a base is desired. Used to cover expansion space between the floor and the wall. Pre-drill and nail into the wall, not the floor.
- **T-Molding**: A molding used as a transition piece from one rigid flooring to another of similar height or to gain expansion space. Fasten at the heel in the center of the molding. Additional rigid support may need to be added to the heel of the molding dependent upon the thickness of the goods covered. Do not use this molding as a transition to carpet.

INSTALLERS—ADVISE YOUR CUSTOMER OF THE FOLLOWING

**Seasons: Heating and Non-heating**

Recognizing that hardwood floor dimensions will be slightly affected by varying levels of humidity within your building, care should be taken to control humidity levels within the 30–50% range. To protect your investment and to assure that your floors provide lasting satisfaction, we have provided our recommendations below.

- **Heating Season (Dry)**: A humidifier is recommended to prevent excessive shrinkage in hardwood floors due to low humidity levels. Wood stoves and electric heat tend to create very dry conditions.
- **Non-heating Season (Humid, Wet)**: Proper humidity levels can be maintained by use of an air conditioner, dehumidifier, or by turning on your heating system periodically during the summer months. Avoid excessive exposure to water from tracking during periods of inclement weather. Do not obstruct in any way the expansion joint around the perimeter of your floor.

NOTE: Final inspection by the end-user should occur from a standing position.

**FLOOR REPAIR**

Minor damage can be repaired with a Bruce® touch-up kit or filler. Major damage will require board replacement, which can be done by a professional floor installer.